

REPORT

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INFORMATION REPORT

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1. Following 16 June 1953, Rudolf Herrnstadt, editor-in-chief of Neues Deutschland, was under constant surveillance. During working hours in the editorial offices of the newspaper he was continually accompanied by two SED guards. On 25 and 26 July 1953, just prior to his removal, he appeared in his office for a short period only. On 27 July 1953 the majority of the Neues Deutschland staff were ignorant of Herrnstadt's removal until they heard the news over the radio.
2. In the weeks following Herrnstadt's removal as editor-in-chief, eight SED Party Shop Group (Betriebsparteiorganisation) (BPO) sessions were conducted during which the Herrnstadt case was discussed.
3. The first of these meetings, which lasted from 6:00 p.m. until 6:00 the following morning, was under the chairmanship of Fred Oelssner, who also gave the main speech in which he repeated the accusations against Herrnstadt which had been published. When Oelssner had finished, Wilhelm Cirus asked to speak and stated that he had suspected Herrnstadt's role for a long time but had never been able to confirm his suspicions.
4. In the discussion which followed the emphasis was shifted more and more to Herrnstadt's private life, in which he was accused above all of having an affair with Margot Pfannstiel. Pfannstiel, who was present, denied having had an affair with Herrnstadt.
5. Herrnstadt's private life was also largely the subject of the seven subsequent meetings. Walter Graul and Heinz Friedrich did not state in so many words that they were opposed to Herrnstadt's actions but claimed that they had known nothing about them. A resolution on Herrnstadt was not drawn up.
6. After the eight meetings new elections for the Party Directorate of Neues Deutschland were conducted. For the eleven positions to be filled, 60 candidates were proposed, and of these 46 were eliminated in the discussions which took place prior to the election, leaving a total of 14 candidates. The election was secret and had to be repeated three times. Since during the first three attempts there were too many invalid votes

25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

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7. Prior to 27 July 1953, Herrnstadt had exercised complete control over the editorial policies of Neues Deutschland. After his removal two factions were formed, a pro-Herrnstadt group consisting of Otto Behrend, Heinz Friedrich, Walter Graul, Klaus Huhn, and Georg Kraus, and an anti-Herrnstadt group consisting of Wilhelm Girmus, Alfred Reinert, and Heinz Schliffke.
8. Approximately three weeks after Herrnstadt's removal Margot Pfannstiel left Neues Deutschland. Her present whereabouts or activities are unknown.
9. After Herrnstadt's removal there was a general wave of dismissals of employees of the newspaper which continued through October 1953.
10. The following staff members of Neues Deutschland were in regular contact with the Central Committee of the SED: Herrnstadt, Heinz Friedrich, Wilhelm Girmus, Walter Graul, Georg Kraus, Alfred Reinert, and Lilo Thoms. Several representatives of the Central Committee also visited the editorial offices daily.
11. Heinz Schliffke, editor for science and technical matters, maintains regular contact with the SED. His section is probably a camouflaged SED office in the newspaper.
12. The wife of Georg Kraus, née Mansk, is the director of the Druckerei-und Verlagskontor in the vicinity of Alexanderplatz. This institute is a roof organization for supra-Party publishing ventures. The Berliner Verlag, the publishing house Die Wirtschaft and possibly the publishing house of Der freie Bauer belong to this organization.
13. The publishing and editorial offices of Neues Deutschland have a total of 74 passenger cars assigned to them; the printing office, 62 passenger cars and trucks.

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